

critical digest

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T. M. KRAUS

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New York Theatre Week

Slightly Delinquent- Blackfriars Guild, 10/25-Blackfriars present new comedy by Leo Thomas directed by Dennis Gurney...The Dumb Show-4th St Theatre 10/26/54 David Ross presents revival in English of S. Ansky's... directed by Mr. Ross...In Splendid Error-Greenwich Mews . Greenwich Mews presents new play by William Branch with William Marshall directed by Salem Ludwig...The Traveling Lady- Playhouse 10/27-Playwrights Company presents new play by Horton Foote with Kim Stanley, Jack Lord, directed by Vincent Donahue...The Rainmaker-Fort 10/28. Ethel Reiner presents N. Richard Nash new play with Geraldine Page directed by Joseph Anthony.

Digests of Current Week Theatre Reviews

Peter Pan- Winter Garden 10/20- Mary Martin as Peter is wonderful the NY daily critics agree. Super production by her husband Richard Halliday was lauded by all. Though several did note that the music by Mark Charlap and Carolyn Leigh were not equal to the Barrie script or the current version. Atkinson, Times, thought show might have been over-produced, but it is still a vastly amusing show. Kerr, Herald Tribune, also thought some of the dances unneeded, but he also enjoyed it. Captivating show with Chril Ritchard the best Captain Hook on record, adds Chapman, News. Coleman, Mirror, hailed show which also features Martin's daughter Heller Halliday, as the first triumph of the season for the young in heart of all ages. Watts, Post, joined Kerr, in devoting praise to the special effects and flying wire take-offs in the show. The production was billed by McClain, Journal American, as about as bright and enjoyable a production of the classic as we are apt to see in our time. Unlike his colleagues, Hawkins, World Telegram & Sun, found the songs gay. He joined others in praising sets and curtains by Peter Larkin.

Sands of Negev- President 10/19 Coleman, Mirror, solo NY daily critic to okay production of first Israeli play to be shown in NY. He recommended production by B & L Rothman of Yigal Mossensohn, adapted by Shimon Wincelberg, for those who would like to know more about Israel's fight for freedom. Rest of critics granted that play which ran in Israel for two years may have been vital there, but they panned the present production as unrealistic and poorly done. Translation, actors and staging shared blame. Lack of solid performances by cast was reason Atkinson, Times, picked. Proceedings, fears Kerr, Herald Tribune, are blanketed with air of a respectful exercise. Neither exciting nor touching, noted Hawkins, WT&S, and Watts, Post. Celia Adler and Peter Capell head cast directed by Boris Tumarin.

Sing Me No Lullaby- Phoenix 10/15- Times aisle sitter sole daily critic to approve Robert Ardley new play which opened season at downtown theatre. The first two acts he found absorbing, though puzzling. The third act, Times critic noted, constitutes the most forceful statement anyone has made in the theatre for ages. Direction and acting also termed perfect. But rest of critics thought play was more of a thesis of a liberal view than a drama. Kerr, Herald Tribune, tabbed it a serious comic strip. While Coleman, Mirror, thought script inept and incoherent. Agressively dull and epically inept, added Chapman.

I Feel Wonderful- De Lys 10/18/ Hawkins, WT&S, and McClain, Journal American, enjoyed revue produced by Sidney Oshrin with music and lyrics by Jerry Herman and sketches by Though majority of other critics okayed one or two performers, they feared work by 22 year old writer not much above college revue level.

' Off Broadway '

Gateway Stock Co, Great Smokey Mt. National Park, Tenn, will give two performances of Ah Wilderness at Brandon House, NYC Oct 26-27...Iphigenia in Tauris will be presented Nov 8 by John Hall Players, 342 E 63...Everyman's Theatre presents Ida L Erlich's The Girl From Samos at Labor Temple, 242 E 14. Play will be presented Mon through Wed nights and on Sat nights...Tempo Theatre will present 3 one act plays Nov 27 at Speyer Hall, 184 Eldridge St...Arena Players, Brooklyn, present The Male Animal Nov 8-11 at Benson Chateau, 1785 86th St...Opera Productions opens Nov 10 at Provincetown Playhouse for limited engagement of double bill, Sun Up and The Tsar has Photographs Taken.

Noah, production by Broadway Chapel Players presented Sundays only, added 2 more pro reviews. Herridge, Post, praised it as good theatre and good religion, while Beaufort, Christian Science Monitor, billed it as a devout and often moving interpretation of Obey's play.

' Yiddish '

Habima Baktana opens its 5th season of Hebrew productions with Joshua Halevi's I Am The Captain at Herzliha Playhouse, 314 W 91. Performances Oct 30, 31, Nov 6, Nov 20. Group will latter this season present Hebrew musical The Sabreh in Manhattan.

' West Coast '

That's Life closed at Las Palmas after 17 week run. Revue may play on Broadway in Jan...Main Objective, new play by David Larson, playing at Actors, Inc Playhouse.

' Vaudeville '

New Palace stage show features Kurt Jones Dances, Stump and Stumpy, Joe Lenke, Stylers. Picture is "Personal Affair"

' Theatre Film Notes '

Martine Carol will have a leading role in 20th Century Fox "Can-Can"...Jo Van Fleet plays Bessie in Paramount's "The Rose Tattoo".

' Theatre TV Notes '

Judith Anderson, who will play on NBC-TV Hamlet Nov 28 production of Hamlet, plans to play in Shakespeare play on Broadway after an out of town tryout... Ethel Merman rehearsing for Nov 10 CBS TV production of Panama Hattie...NBC TV seeking Eddie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds for Me and Juliet color TV...Understudies from NY stageshows will be featured on WPIX Showcase.

' Theatre Record Comments '

"Lee Wiley Sings Rodgers & Hart" (Storyville Records) won approval from Abel, Variety, on both the record itself and on the "earthy" liner written by George Frazier. Wiley, rates editor, is a full blown songstress who knows what to do with a lyric. Liner copy by ex Life editor was tabbed as the 'most uninbited exposition of the passing show biz scene, done in earthy language, yet to adorn an album designed for home consumption.

' Theatre TV Comments '

"Tonight at 8 30", NBC TV color production of Noel Coward stories starring Conger Rogers drew split notices from the NYC daily TV reviewers. Gould, Times, panned proceedings because he felt star lacked subtlety, delicacy and perception of characters she tried to portray. Tuck, Post, thought only "Still Life" sketch got its points across. On the pro side, Van Horne, World Telegram & Sun, thought show so good it is worth repeating. Restraint and good taste were shows hallmarks. O'Brian, Journal American, loved all elements, except gaudy color TV make-up on star. Otto Preminger as director, producer, and narrator, rated applause from the majority.

Green Room Department

PRODUCER'S LESSON...In private life theatre producers may be the pillars of wisdom, states George Jean Nathan, Journal American, but there seems to be something about the theatre that does things to them whether they be new to it or supposedly experienced hands. Recent errors in production technique which critics feel producers made include inviting critics to Way of the World, staged with all the elegance of a lower East Side delicatessen, the Playwrights Company letting Jo Mielziner sell them a flimsy skelton set for All Summer Long, the Theatre Guild's producing of an obviously bad script Home is the Hero, and S. Burck press agent admitting the weight and cost of the Midsummer Night's Dream sets.

COLUMN TIPS...Danny Kaye wants to play in Captain Jack's Paradise musical on Broadway, reports Walker...Peter Brook auditioning Black Crow that can talk for House of Flowers, hears Kilgallen...Fanny dropped a ballet sequence which cost \$15,000 to stage and costume, notes Farrell...Why was Jean Williams fired from Kismet asks Winchell?

"TOES" DANCES...Dance sequences in On Your Toes are more of an exhumation than a revival, pans Terry, Herald Tribune. The disappointing aspects of most is due to extremely dated backstage at the ballet theme upon which the book is based. Dance critic did enjoy hoofing by David Winters, a brief but engaging solo by Bobby Van and the rain dance number.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...New plays this season have been so disappointing that Watts, Post, figures it is about time someone blamed the critics for the deplorable state of the theatre...If Coleman, Mirror, were a Broadway manager, he would sign Mae West for her own adaption of Sextette...Carrying a brain to the theatre is often worse than lugging a winter overcoat and a pair of galoshes, Chapman, News, declares in recommending Tender Trap.

CRITIC AT WORK...McClain, Journal American, explains the plain, physical and mental labor a critic puts into his job. This includes reading all back TV scripts by TV writers turned playwrights, gathering a clean stock of adjectives from the public library, and living on a light diet to keep the mind clear.

Interview Hi-LITES...The Fabulous Invalid is well on the road to recovery, Richard Aldrich and Richard Myers inform Coleman, Mirror. They pick as two of the most promising developments the new Huntington Hartford Theatre in Los Angeles and the revamped showshop in Louisville.

' Pros & Cons by TMK '

Off Broadway theatre schedule is getting hectic. The success of several groups has brought forth a score of would be producers hoping to become rich the easy way. As long as actors are willing to work at a low fee in just about anything, they can continue to try. Unions, and Actors Equity in particular, should be more strict in what they allow to be produced as "Off Broadway." There is every justification in the world for an "Off Broadway" group to do new and unus-

ual type scripts, to showcase actors in roles they would never have a chance on Broadway, to test new techniques of production, etc. But they should not permit their members to work in half baked musical attempts that would not get past Hartford if done for Broadway. But if they feel they must sanction all attempts at actor employment, then the actor should certainly share in any profits that result from their working at low salaries. End of sermon.

Theatre ticket charge accounts are now available to theatre goers. Theatre Subsidaries, Inc has made arrangements with the Golden Key System, Inc, and the Shubert, City Playhouses and Martin Beck Theatres to test the plan. The new concern headed by Alexander Cohen, 598 Madison Ave, also will set up theatre junkets to New York and out of town theatres.

Plays

The Fifth Season, and The World of Sholom Aleichem closed prior to tours... Abie's Irish Rose will be revived at Holiday... Oh Men, Oh Women closes Nov 13 prior to tour... Sammy will cut out ticket for first 10 weeks... Plain and Fancy due on Broadway Jan 20... The Bad Seed v open in NY Nov 30... The Grand Prize due in NYC Jan 10... Silk Stockings opens Dec 10 at Imperial. The Soft Boiled Egg, an adaption of a French script by Henry Hewes, will be presented on Broadway by his mother, Margaret Hewes.

People

Guests of first Drama Desk meeting of season were Truman Capote, Harold Arlen, Saint Subber, Peter Brook and Pearl Bailey... Alice Ghostley, David Brooks, Jack Cassidy signed for leading roles in Sandhog... Luella Gear, Eileen Heckart, Thomas Chalmers, and Henry Jones signed for The Bad Seed... Virginia Copeland and Gabrielle Ruggiero will alternate in title role of The Saint of Bleecker Street... Janice Rule and William Smithers added to cast of The Flowering Peach... Grace Olsen replaced Shela Reynolds in On With the Show.

Other Broadways

Ground breaking ceremonies for American Shakespeare Festival Theatre & Academy were held at Stratford, Conn, with actual construction due in Jan... 10th anniversary of Theatre '54, Dallas, Texas, will be marked by civic luncheon Nov 3... Marshall Migatz will run stock company this fall at Fox Valley Playhouse, St Charles, Ill.

Theatre Book Notes

"Theatre '54" including abridgements of 12 Broadway shows and records of season edited by John Chapman published by Random House... "Best Plays of 1953-54" edited by Louis Kronenberger published by Dodd Mead... "George Pierce Baker and the American Theatre" by Wisner Payne Kinne published by Farrar Press.

Theatre Record Notes

Coral Records issued disc of The Boy and songs with Teresa Brewer and Don Cornell... Original cast RCA Album of The Boy Friend issued this week.

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